
To: All Department, Programs, and Schools in the Faculty of Arts
Please Distribute to All Teaching Staff

From: Rick Kleer, Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Faculty of Arts

Re: Reminders for the start of the Fall 2008 semester

Date: 11 August 2008

Course Outlines

1. You must provide students with a written course outline within the first three contact hours. This outline must inform them of the course content and prerequisites*, the details and due dates of any required assignments and examinations, the grading scheme, and your policies (if any) on attendance, late assignments and missed tests or examinations. Once you've handed out your syllabus, any subsequent changes to your grading scheme (for example, adding an assignment or making a midterm count as 10% instead of 15% of the total grade) or to the dates and/or times of the final exam must be circulated in writing and agreed to by all students in the class.

*While Banner automatically checks that students enrolled in the course have met the necessary prerequisites, this check is not always reliable (especially in complex cases). So please remind students of the prerequisites for your classes.

2. When assigning due dates for any end-of-term assignments, please choose dates consistent with your deadlines for submitting grades. Grades will be due in my office 5 days (not including Sundays) after the date of the final exam or, in the case of courses without a final exam, 10 days after the first day of the final-exam period (which in the Fall 2008 semester is 8 December).
3. Instructors cannot unilaterally alter the time and/or date of their final exam after these have been published by the Registrar's Office. After the date and time have been published, they can be changed only by securing the written agreement of all students in the class. The one exception to this rule is if you wish to substitute a term paper for a final exam. In that case you need merely inform your students about this change in your syllabus.

Please notify the Registrar's Office of any change in the date of the final exam, or if a final examination is scheduled for your class but you do not intend to hold one. The official exam date in Banner will be altered accordingly, which will both make for more effective use of classroom space and reduce the potential for your students becoming confused.

4. If you intend to assign a grade of "no paper" (NP) to students who do not complete one or more essential components of the course, your syllabus must clearly indicate the components in question and explicitly warn students of the consequences of failing to complete them. A final exam is always deemed an essential component; so your syllabus should describe it as such.
5. You cannot penalize students for persistently missing or coming late to your classes (for instance by barring them from writing the final exam) unless there is a statement to this effect in your syllabus. Please note that in accordance with Section 5.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar, if you intend to impose such a penalty on a particular student, you must first warn the student of this in writing as their attendance record comes near to the point at which the rule will be invoked.

Faculty of Arts Academic Announcements Handout

6. Faculty policy requires that you supply a copy of the Faculty of Arts Student Announcements handout along with your course syllabi. All department secretaries have been provided with an electronic copy of this document. It is also available at http://www.uregina.ca/arts/student_services/pdf/announcements-handout.pdf.
7. While the Student Announcements handout includes a little information on University policies concerning academic misconduct (i.e. plagiarism and cheating), you would be well advised to spend some time discussing these matters in the classroom. This is especially important in 100- and 200-level courses, where many of the students may not yet have encountered a formal definition of plagiarism or been told of the associated penalties. The policies in question are outlined in Section 5.13 of the Undergraduate Calendar. Please consult this section if you suspect that a student in your course has plagiarized or cheated. This will ensure that your students are treated fairly and also that they can't escape punishment just because due process wasn't followed. I urge all Faculty members to be very vigilant about plagiarism. It undermines one of the most central goals of any university: getting students to think for themselves.

You should be aware that University policy calls for the Dean or designate (which in the Faculty of Arts is me) to be contacted as soon as it has been established that an act of plagiarism has occurred. University regulations also stipulate that the Dean or designate (which in the Faculty of Arts is me) has the final decision on any penalties to be assessed for academic misconduct (though I will be sure to consult with you before making my decision).

Evaluation of Students

8. The University's grading system is described in Section 5.9 of the Undergraduate Calendar. That section also offers guidelines for assigning grades, for instance by defining the general characteristics that distinguish an A-level from a B-level performance.
9. At least 75% of the grade for your course must be based on material that can be reassessed by others (in case students choose to appeal their grades). Normally that means that no more than 25% of the grade can be based on classroom participation and/or other forms of oral feedback. If you wish to use oral exams and are having a problem with this ceiling, one option is to have the exams recorded.
10. University policy prohibits you from scheduling any quizzes, tests or examinations worth more than 10% of the final grade in the last three hours of lectures or between the formal end of lectures and the first day of the final examination period (unless you have prior written approval from your dean and provide a copy to the Registrar). Term papers, projects, essays and practical exams (laboratory, presentations, recitals, exhibitions) are exempt from this rule.
11. You should assign a grade of NP whenever a student fails to complete any component of the course work that was explicitly designated as required (all final examinations are considered to be required). Sometimes instructors prefer to assign the very low numerical grade the student actually "earned" in the course. But a grade of NP is a signal that students aren't taking their course work seriously. Students who receive all NPs in a semester will automatically be asked to discontinue their studies (a penalty that would not be prescribed if all of their grades were below 40).
12. Instructors cannot grant deferrals of course work beyond the date of the final exam. Grades of IN (incomplete) or DE (deferred) can be awarded only by the student's Faculty or College. See Section 5.7 of the Undergraduate Calendar for further details.

Other Relevant Issues

13. It is the Faculty's policy to make every reasonable accommodation for special-needs students. But instructors are not required to offer accommodations unless the students in question have already contacted the Disability Resource Office and obtained a formal, written statement of the desired accommodations. University policy requires you to reply to this statement in writing (with a copy to Disability Resource Office) indicating the accommodations you are prepared to provide. Please keep in mind that the only acceptable occasion for refusing a request for accommodation is when granting it would compromise the academic integrity of your course. The Dean's Office will cover the costs associated with meeting a request for accommodation (though you should consult with my office before incurring large costs). I would appreciate hearing from you whenever you have questions about or difficulties with special-needs accommodations.
14. Please inform your students at the beginning of the semester that they should be checking their University of Regina email accounts regularly for important official correspondence (about refund and withdrawal deadlines, etc.). If students prefer not to use the web-based email interface provided by the University, please let them know that they can easily have their University email forwarded to an existing personal email account by using the form available under "Top ten items of interest" at <http://www.uregina.ca/compserv/>. If students go this route, they will need to check their junk mail folders regularly for the first few weeks. Hotmail, Yahoo and other commercial accounts have very aggressive junk-mail filters that will often screen out University-related emails.
15. The University of Regina is subject to Saskatchewan's *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Compliance with this statute requires, among other things, that you do not reveal students' grades or ID numbers to anyone other than the students themselves (**even if the request comes from their spouse or parents**) unless they have given you prior permission in writing. For this reason you should not post or circulate any lists that show student names and student ID numbers together. It is fine to post student grades by ID number alone, if the class is large enough that no one could be expected to link the number to a particular student's name. (Note: this policy does not preclude discussing students' academic standing with your University colleagues, as long as these discussions are kept confidential.)